

Resolutions highlight dangers of asbestos, need to develop treatments for Mesothelioma

(Washington, D.C.) –Today, Senator Patty Murray and Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) introduced resolutions designating September 26, 2009 as “National Mesothelioma Awareness Day.” Senator Murray is a leading advocate for banning asbestos, and the resolution calls attention to the risks it poses to members of our armed forces, firefighters, and workers and families across the country. Congresswoman McCollum has championed the cause to ban asbestos in the U.S. for over 5 years and she is pleased Congress has advanced this important effort to raise public awareness of the disease and the need for treatments.

“The dangers of asbestos went unrecognized for far too long, with tragic results for so many workers and families across the country who developed mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases,” said Senator Patty Murray. “‘National Mesothelioma Awareness Day’ is an opportunity to raise awareness of efforts to treat this deadly disease and support the victims and their families. I am committed to continuing my work fighting to ban asbestos in the United States and educating the American public about the deadly consequences of asbestos exposure.”

“Too many Americans don’t know that asbestos exposure remains a problem. Enacting National Mesothelioma Awareness Day (H.Res 771) is an important step towards educating the nation about the causes of this deadly disease. I will continue to work with Senator Murray and my colleagues in the U.S. House to finally ban asbestos and provide real help for those suffering from mesothelioma and their families,” Congresswoman McCollum said.

For more information on Senator Murray’s work on this issue, see: <http://murray.senate.gov/asbestos>

The full text of resolutions introduced in the Senate and the House follows:

Whereas there is no known safe level of exposure to asbestos;

Whereas millions of workers in the United States have been, and continue to be, exposed to dangerous levels of asbestos;

Whereas the National Institutes of Health reported to Congress in 2006 that mesothelioma is a difficult disease to detect, diagnose, and treat;

Whereas the National Cancer Institute recognizes a clear need for new treatments to improve the outlook for patients with mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases;

Whereas the need to develop treatments for mesothelioma was overlooked for decades;

Whereas even the best available treatments for mesothelioma typically have only a very limited effect, and a person diagnosed with mesothelioma is expected to survive between

8 and 14 months;

Whereas mesothelioma has claimed the lives of such heroes and public servants as Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., and Congressman Bruce F. Vento;

Whereas many mesothelioma victims were exposed to asbestos while serving in the Navy;

Whereas it is believed that many of the firefighters, police officers, and rescue workers who served at Ground Zero on September 11, 2001, may be at increased risk of contracting

mesothelioma in the future; and

Whereas cities and localities throughout the United States will recognize September 26, 2009, as “Mesothelioma Awareness Day”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 26, 2009, as “National Mesothelioma Awareness Day”; and calls on the people of the United States, Federal departments and agencies, States, localities, organizations, and media to observe National Mesothelioma Awareness day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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